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## Sketchings.

## EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE.

Boston, Feb. 23d, 1855.

Boston seems to me to have greater opportunity to become an artistic city than any other with which I am acquainted in America. The Common alone would give facilities for architectural and statuesque display, which I fear we shall never have in New York. Bostonians are proud of it, though it seems to me with little reason, since its adorning is owing to Nature alone, and if it is beautiful they have little right to congratulate themselves otherwise than as the inhabitants of a beautiful valley might be glad that they chanced to be born in it. When Boston has done its duty by its Common, and made Art meet Nature on common ground, and unite in a true fraternal embrace, they may be proud not only of it, but of themselves.

There is too much of the feeling which London has to its parks—a self-gratulation where self has no merit. Londoners compare Hyde Park with the Champs Elysées, and become inflated on an assumed superiority, which consists in their never having done anything to the Park but let it alone, or at worst to disfigure it by a paltry gate or two, and hedge it in with impassable fences, lest somebody might steal in and sleep there at night. The Frenchman has manfully gone about to ornament his grounds according to his own ideas, which, be they, in their carrying out, good or bad, are still criticisable as thoughts of Art. They are what the Gaul considers to be beautiful, and that is sufficient for him. Hyde Park has no more to do with Art than a wild forest.

Still, not to criticise Boston Common, it may be well that as yet there has been no great incli-

nation to adorn it, which, with the imperfect knowledge of the laws of Art which our people have now, might have led to some most outrageous monstrosities, which the fear of expense and a kind of veneration for antiquity would have made fixities in time. They have a State House ugly enough, when it ought, from its position, to be very beautiful. I hope that some true genius will make his advent in Boston before the State House has stood so long that it must stand from its antiquity, and will put up a new parthenon in our Athens—not a Greek one, but a true new world—new age conception. The position and its approaches give opportunities for a magnificent combination of architectural and sculptural excellence, just as at present they afford a trying light for poor works to be seen in. And then how beautiful the broad expanse of green of the Common might be made with statuary along its walks, and noble buildings around its boundaries.

Yet the whole matter of public grounds, not only here but all through America, proves to me that the public taste is slumbering for some great new idea to awaken it to a veritable life. The people have no sort of fondness for the things they have seen in the way of ornamentation, and wait for something to come which shall awaken a genuine enthusiasm—some new grand form of human thought—which shall at once take hold of their hearts. French parks and classical architecture, with its domes and pediments and vacant masses of stone, do not interest men who want something to *think* of. The quaintness of the former may amuse, and the simplicity and unity of the latter may prove impressive, but we want more than amusement in our grounds, and more than a mere impression of architectural effect to maintain interest in our buildings. We are a thoughtful people; and there is no thought for us in Greek architecture—we must have in everything around us, a meaning—a something to feed our intellectual natures. And so it is as well that we do nothing now, because, all that is done under the present *régime* of fashion—I cannot say taste—must be pulled down.

But, Bostonian taste is munificent in some directions. There are many noble pictures here. Allston "still lives" here. He impresses as me much as the city itself does—fine and admirable where himself, but less so where built upon by the reverence of other men. Great as he is as a colorist, he would have been greater still if he had not studied Titian, and if he had been governed more by his own great common-sense perceptions, rather than his ideas of what the traditions of Art required of him. His "Beatrice" is the most satisfactory of his works that I have seen, and is, indeed, a sweet picture in every essential respect; but even in that I felt an indecision—a want of the glorious boldness and dogmatic way of working which a man falls into when he feels the fullest inspiration of Art. In the same collection is a landscape with a magnificent sky, and fine in its composition, but with the same characteristic hesitation in its minor developments.

The Belshazzar's Feast, at the Athenæum, is in every respect unfortunate, and if he had lived to complete it, it would have been still more unfortunate for his reputation. Yet there are some paintings of accessories which satisfy me that he would have been mightily successful—where he felt at ease, and nowhere else ought an artist ever to be.

Page's Madonna and Child interested me much, though it was hung next to the ceiling, where it could scarcely be seen to advantage. It is full in color and wonderful in its flesh quality, but lacking in repose both of color and composition.

R. S. Greenough's Franklin is nearly completed, and will be sent to the foundry in two or three weeks. It is a noble work, unaffected and thoroughly full of common-sense. This is a quality not by any means so usual in modern Art as men might suppose in these practical times. I believe, indeed, it is the rarest of all artistic traits. To take a just and matter-of-fact view of a man who has passed through the process of apotheosis which we send our heroes and sages through as much as the ancients ever did, is not by any means easy to any but a philosopher. This Greenough has proved himself to be, by the standard of his Franklin. The head is a grand thoughtful piece of character, and worthy of Franklin if he *was* all the sage and politician our traditions make him. The figure is of colossal size, and is represented in his actual costume, with his right hand resting on a cane, and his left holding the cocked hat. The draperies are unobtrusively, yet faithfully realized. The head is thrown slightly forward, looking on the ground and in reverie, expressing subtly the real character of the man—shrewd, thoughtful, profound indeed, yet essentially material in all his ideas. Franklin could not have been himself with his head thrown back looking to the heavens, or with eye forward for action—he had neither faith nor heroism, but simply wit and intellectual force. This is expressed by the statue, which impresses me as a whole as one of those rare things—a genuine work of Art—the realization of an idea.

Ary Scheffer's "Dante and Beatrice," in the possession of Mr. Perkins, did not impress me so favorably as the "Temptation," though there are some very fine points in it. It is entirely deficient in beauty of composition, and the principal figure, that of Beatrice, is deficient in character and physical expression. The drapery is severe, rigid even, and in color the whole is painfully weak and misty. There is in the same collection another picture of Scheffer's—a "Macbeth with the Witches," painted thirty years ago, so entirely different in character, that it would not be recognized as by the same mind. It seemed more like one of De Camp's—overcharged and violent in color, execution and action—the witches as informal and beastly as his Beatrice is saintly, and the whole manifesting an inordinate desire for the tokens of mere external power.

Mr. Perkins has also a very fine drawing by Overbeck, the most interesting example of the great purist I have ever seen.

Items of current Art doings I must leave for another letter.

W. J. S.



MR. LEWIS LANG, of New York, but now temporarily located at Washington City, has just completed an elegant portrait of the Hon. James Guthrie, Secretary of the Treasury. The friends of that distinguished statesman regard Mr. Lang's picture as a most successful effort. Mr. Guthrie's face is a somewhat difficult study, but the artist has succeeded in perfectly transferring its striking peculiarities to the canvas. Mr. Lang is well-known in this city, from having executed the portraits of some of our most prominent citizens—that of Robert Ewing, Esq., having been especially admired. Quite a number of orders have been received by Mr. Lang, both from the diplomatic corps and from other distinguished personages now resident in that city, and we have no doubt, that these will be painted with the same skill which the artist has exhibited on the picture of Secretary Guthrie. Mr. Lang has risen to be one of the most popular portrait painters in this country. And his present efforts among the magnates of the nation will loudly extend his fame.—*Philadelphia Evening Argus*.

LEUTZE has a picture at the gallery of Messrs. Williams, Stevens & Williams, painted for W. W. Corcoran, Esq., of Washington. It represents the Power of Music; Milton is playing on an organ surrounded by the family of Cromwell. Parts of this picture are very fine; the female and boy in the right of the foreground, and the figures behind the organ, standing so as to receive the light from a neighboring window. The usual power of this artist is apparent in this picture, and we think it better than many of his late productions.

#### FOREIGN ART GOSSIP.

VIEWS OF THE CRYSTAL PALACE AND PARK AT SYDENHAM.—In Mr. Wyatt's introductory chapter to this work, we find some interesting remarks on the origin and prospects of the Crystal Palace. Hitherto, in England, the author says, the Fine Arts had been wooed only under their severest aspects. They had been made objects of study, trade and fashion; but at Sydenham an attempt was made to exhibit them as sources of innocent and stimulating pleasure—to popularize them, trace their mutual relation, and to show the harmony that pervaded them all. From the days of Henry the Eighth the aristocracy had patronized Art; but during the present century the *bourgeoisie* have evinced a taste for the same pursuit: and when the people become educated in Art by going to Sydenham, Mr. Wyatt thinks the true and noble will be patronized, and a genuine admiration for what is good extend. The present Exhibition has an ideal element which its prototype did not possess. Its predecessor dwelt only with the Present—its predecessor, while dealing with the philosophy of the Past, appeals also to the Future. The real germ of the Sydenham Exhibition is to be traced in the successful efforts made by the French Government to elevate the people even in their amusements: the most suggestive of these efforts was the Great Museum of Antiquities commenced by M. Le Noir, in the year 1790, in the deserted Convents of the Petits Augustins. Besides this, scarcely less remarkable were the museums of sculpture in the Louvre and Luxembourg, M. Sommerard's Mediæval Collection in the Hôtel de Clugny, the Jardin des Plantes, the Galleries of Versailles, and the Gardens of St. Cloud. In France the system is to lead, educate, and direct public taste. We are proud, dogged, self-dependent. We have not yet learned to see that the cost of such works is soon repaid by increased artistic skill and the advance of intelligence in design: of mechanical contrivance and brute force we have enough, of taste and creativeness scarce a spark. In the words of Mr. Wyatt—

"The great end and aim of the Crystal

Palace are to cultivate the imaginative faculty in the workman himself—to cause its value to be appreciated by the class of employers—and so make a recognition of it indispensable on the part of purchasers, and of all who, by their position or influence, may be able to direct the current of popular feeling. Now, for instance, that the workman has an opportunity of seeing how exquisitely conventional foliage was treated by the modeller and carver in the best days of Greek or Renaissance Art, he will have no excuse for those heavy lines and coarse projections which, in modern cabinet-work, too frequently destroy the sense of surface, and convert into leading forms what should rightly be but subsidiary decorations: the employer who exhibits in his shop goods characterized by such defects, will be quickly superseded in his calling by one more keenly alive to the advantages now offered to him: the purchaser who transfers to his apartments objects so tastelessly decorated, will be laughed at by such of his friends as have noted for themselves how much more simple, and yet more beautiful, such ornamentation may be made: and thus the tide will flow from class to class, till ultimately we may hope that, almost insensibly, a better and a clearer recognition of material beauty may extend throughout the country, elevating our manufactures to at least an equality in point of design with those of any other nation in Europe."

We are glad to hear that the Directors of the Palace Company have traced a grand scheme of a wider and more perfect Art-Exhibition. Their present chambers are the mere store-rooms for future beauties. They recognize the importance of Numismatics, and desire especially fac-similes of the medals of Sicily and Magna Græcia. To these they would add a chronological series of antique bronzes, and copies of the finest vases of Nola and Etruria. They covet the ivories of the Eastern and Western Empires—not to mention Mediæval Europe, and restorations of the tombs of Egypt, Greece, Etruria and Rome. Oriental, Mexican and Scandinavian antiquities are still unrepresented. There is a crying demand for specimens of Mogul architecture from Agra and Delhi, and examples of the magnificence of Arungzebe and his descendants. The ancient Britons are unrepresented either by arms or coins. They hope to possess a series of the richest stained glass windows throughout Europe—mural paintings executed in fac-similes from the frescoes of the old masters—monumental brasses—niello and enamels—precious metal work—illustrations of the whole chronological sequence of ceramic industry, and of the glass manufactures of Venice and Bohemia, together with personal ornaments and relics of the ancients in historical and progressive order.

In the other departments the Directors plan equally grand improvements. Already Botany may be studied there—not in the *hortus siccus*, but the living flower; and the child may in an hour realize all the long deductions of Geology. In Mechanics it is intended to exhibit a scientific epitome of the products which form the base of human industry, and of the machines and processes by which they are converted into fresh forms.—*Athenæum*.

From Paris we hear that great activity prevails among the engravers. The following important line engravings are in progress. M. Mercury is engaged on a work after M. Delaroche, "The Execution of Lady Jane Grey," the original of which, in the possession of Prince Demidoff, was commenced in 1835. The plate is now all but completed. "From my own knowledge," says our correspondent, "I can speak of this engraving as a miracle of finish and of delicacy of execution." M. A. Francois is working on M. Delaroche's "The Condemnation of Marie Antoinette" (belonging to the

Count d'Hanolstein, a French nobleman). This picture was exhibited by Messrs. Colnaghi in 1852, and the plate is about to appear. The same engraver is working on the same master's "The Virgin at the Foot of the Cross" (belonging to the Public Museum of Liège),—"Christ in the Garden of Olives" (belonging to Messrs. Gonsill & Co., of Paris),—"The Children in the Tower, Praying" (the property of our countryman, Mr. Naylor, of Liverpool). M. H. Dupont is engaged on "The Burial of Christ," by the same painter (the property of the Count d'Hanolstein), and on "The Finding of Moses" (belonging to Baron Rothschild, of Paris). M. Z. Prevost has in hand "Mendicants at Rome," also by M. Delaroche, (belonging to Mr. E. André, of Paris). M. J. Francois is occupied on "Maternal Joys," by the same artist (belonging to Mr. Pescator, of Paris, and the drawing of which is in the possession of the Queen). M. H. Dussou is employed on a Raffaele, "Virgin and Child,"—a drawing in the Louvre; it is being executed for the Government; and on Correggio's "Saint Catherine," also a drawing in the Louvre, and also to order of the Government. M. Keller is working at M. A. Scheffer's "Holy Women at the Tomb," exhibited in the French Exhibition in London last year by M. Gambart, to whom it belongs. M. Lefebvre has in hand Murillo's "Conception," the picture in the Louvre. M. N. Lecompte is doing M. A. Scheffer's "Dante and Beatrice"—a beautiful subject, the original picture of which is at Rotterdam. M. Bridoux has in hand a Raffaele, "The Virgin and Child" (called Aldobrandini), which is in the collection of Lord Garvagh. "Here," as our correspondent says, "is a goodly list of line engravings—refreshing to a country like ours, once pre-eminent in that art—but where now, thanks to Mr. Jacob Bell and Sir Edwin Landseer-copyrights, the profession is extinct." Mr. George Doo, the engraver of "Nature," "Lord Eldon," &c., has become a portrait painter; while Mr. Robinson, owing fortune and independence to sources unconnected with his noble calling, admires at his leisure the productions of Sharpe and Woollett, executed at a period when Art was unbled by native "painters of genius."

THE UNIVERSAL EXHIBITION OF 1855.—By a decree of the 20th of January, Count of Nieuwenkerke, Director-General of the Imperial Museums, Superintendent des *Beaux-Arts* of the Imperial Palace, and Member of the Institute, has been appointed President of the Jury for the Inspection and Admission of Works of Art intended for the Universal Exhibition of 1855. By another decree, the following gentlemen have been appointed Members of the Jury for the same object:—*For the Section of Paintings and Engravings*: MM. Abel Pujol, Alaux Brascassat, Couder, Desnoyers, H. Flandin, Forster, Heim, Hersent, Leon Cogniet, Picot, Robert-Fleury, and Horace Vernet, all of which are Members of the Institute of France, besides MM. A. de Beaumont, Duc de Cambacères, Couture, Dauzats, Delessert, Du Sommerard, L. Lacaze, Lehmann, Leon Noël, Marquis Maison, A. Moreau, Moulleron, Maller, Place, de Reiset, T. Rousseau, de Tromelin, and Troyon.—*For the Section of Sculpture*: Count de Laborde, Dumont, Duret, Gatteaux, Lemaire, de Longpérier, Nanteuil, Petitot, Seurre (ainé), Count Turpin de Crissé, all of whom are Members of the Institute, besides MM. Barré (père), Barye, J. Deboy, Pollet, Rude, Sauvageot, Toussaint, and de Vieil. Castel.—*And for the Section of Architecture*: MM. Caristie, Duban, de Gisors, Hittorff, Le Bas, Lenormant, Members of the Institute, besides MM. de Caumont, Labrousse, Lassus, Lefuel, Lenoir, and Viollet-Leduc. After the 15th of March next, no works of Art will be admitted, and the galleries for their reception being already open, the arduous duties of these Committees will commence at once.—*The Artist*.



THE WORKS OF LIVING FRENCH ARTISTS continue to command high prices; sixty pictures of this description from the collection of M. E. S. were sold by auction last week at Paris, of which the following are the principal lots:—"Les Fumeurs," by Meissonier, 7,950 francs; "A Suicide," by Decamps, 5,290 f.; "Landscape and Castle," by Alfred Stevens, 5,290 f.; "Landscape" effect of Sunset, by Decamps, 3,170 f.; "Landscape" morning effect, by T. Rousseau, 2,650f.; "Abordage," a sea piece, by Gudin, 2,500f.; "Filen et Béarnaise, an interior, by Camille Roqueplan, 2,465 f.; "Landscape and Cattle," A. Stevens, 2,050 f.; "The Grander," by Decamps, 1,890 f.; "Le Jardin Français à Venise," by Ziem, 1,470 f.; "Musical Party," A. Stevens, 1,340 f.; "A Game Piece," by Baron, 1,260 f.; "La Mort de l'Amour," by Decamps, 1,680 f. The amount of the sixty pictures produced over 22,000 f. (£4,200).—*The Artist.*

A STATUE is about to be erected in the island of Martinique, to the memory of the Empress Josephine; the sculptor chosen for the work is M. Vital Dubray. The Emperor Napoleon III. has given 12,000 francs towards defraying the cost, and the authorities of Martinique have voted a credit of 25,000 francs, with the understanding that more will be forthcoming, if required.

THE Collection of Mr. Windus, of Tottenham, so rich in the productions of our Turner, is to be brought to the hammer in the coming spring; it will be remembered that a portion of this collection was sold in the summer of 1853.

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Varnishing day will be on Saturday the 10th March, from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M., without further notice.

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